Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 COPENH 03069 201454Z

41
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 INT-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-05 SAJ-01 OMB-01 SAM-01 /082 W
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R 201331Z OCT 75
FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1675
INFO AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION NATO
SECDEF
21ST AIR DIV HANCOCK FLD NEW YORK
ADCOM ENT AFB CO

C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 3069

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, GL, DA
SUBJECT: HOMERULE FOR GREENLAND

1. SUMMARY: DENMARK IS TAKING DEFINITE STEPS TO GIVE A LIMITED FORM OF HOME RULE TO GREENLAND WITH 1979 AS THE REPORTED GOAL. FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE AFFAIRS WILL BE RETAINED BY THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT WILL BE SHARED, WITH THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT RETAINING THE DECIDING VOICE. NO EARLY CHANGE IN THE STATUS OF U.S. BASES IN GREENLAND IS EXPECTED. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING AN OCT 15 CALL BY THE CHARGE AND THE AIR ATTACHE ON ERIK HESSELBJERG, PERMANENT UNDERSECRETARY FOR GREENLAND AFFAIRS, THE LATTER DISCUSSED THE RESULTS OF HIS RECENT TRIP TO GREENLAND TO INVESTIGATE THE TIMING AND PROCEDURES FOR HOME RULE. HESSELBJERG SAID THAT THE BASIC DECISION TO HAND OVER RESPONSIBILITY IN CERTAIN
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 COPENH 03069 201454Z

AREAS TO THE GREENLAND COUNCIL HAS BEEN MADE. IN ORDER TO

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

IMPLEMENT THIS DECISION, A GREENLAND HOME RULE COMMITTEE, CONSISTING OF SEVEN METROPOLITAN DANISH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, SEVEN GREENLANDERS OF WHOM TWO ARE MP'S, AND A CHAIRMAN, PROFESSOR OF LAW ISI FOIGHEL.

3. RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOME RULE WILL BE GIVEN TO THE GREENLAND COUNCIL AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE, BUT ON A STEP-BY-STEP BASIS TO ALLOW FOR GROWING PAINS. PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL PROBABLY BE THE FIRST AREA TURNED OVER.

4. HESSELBJERG EMPHASIZED THAT ALL CHANGES WILL TAKE PLACE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF DANISH SOVEREIGNTY AND THAT COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE IS NOT UNDER CONSIDERATION. DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS WOULD REMAIN UNDER THE COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

5. CONTROL OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES (WHICH IS A STRONG FACTOR BEHIND THE PUSH FOR HOME RULE BY THE GREENLANDERS) WILL REMAIN WITH THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, BUT DECISIONS WILL BE MADE ONLY AFTER CONSULTATION WITH MEMBERS OF THE GREEN-LAND COUNCIL. A STEERING COMMITTEE IS TO BE SET UP FOR ADVISING ON THE ALLOCATIONS OF RESOURCES, BUTH THE EXACT FORM IS NOT YET FIRM. PAY OFF FROM THE EVENTUAL EXPLOITATION OF THESE RESOURCES WILL BE SHARED BETWEEN METROPOLITAN DENMARK AND GREENLAND. THE GREENLANDERS WOULD ENJOY COMPLETE CONTROL OF THEIR SHARE OF THIS INCOME.

6. WHILE THE GREENLANDERS OBVIOUSLY WOULD LIKE FULL CONTROL OF THEIR RESOURCES, HESSELBJERG CONSIDERED THIS DANGEROUS "AND UNREALISTIC ON SEVERAL COUNTS." HESSELBJERG SAID THAT DENMARK HAS NO INTENTION OF ALLOWING GREENLAND TO BECOME AN ARCTIC ABU DHABI NOR OF ALLOWING MULTI-NATIONAL COMPANIES TO BILK THE GREENLANDERS.

7. WHEN ASKED WHAT IMPACT ALL THIS MIGHT HAVE ON THE U.S. BASES IN GREENLAND, HESSELBJERG REPLIED, "NONE." HE SAID THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF CHARGING FOR BASE RIGHTS WAS BROUGHT UP BY SOME GREENLANDERS, BUT WHEN IT WAS POINTED OUT TO THEM THAT THE USG MIGHT THEN ASK FOR REIMBURSEMENT FOR MANY SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE BASES TO THE GREENLANDERS, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 COPENH 03069 201454Z

THE SUBJECT WAS DROPPED. HESSELBJERG MENTIONED THAT MANY OF THE YOUNG, VOCAL LEADERS OF THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT HAD MADE CRITICAL STATEMENTS ABOUT DENMARK'S TREATMENT OF GREENLANDERS IN THE PAST AND ABOUT THE OLDER GREENLANDERS' ACQUIESENCE TO THIS TREATMENT. THE YOUNG LEADERS, HOWEVER, ARE WELL-DISPOSED AND NOT MALICIOUS AND WHEN CHALLENGED ON SPECIFIC ACTIONS TAKEN, THEY USUALLY ADMITTED THAT THEY WOULD PROBABLY HAVE MADE THE SAME DECISIONS AS THEIR ELDERS.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

HESSELBJERG ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE DANISH GOVERNMENT WAS AT FAULT FOR HAVING ALLOWED THE PARTIES OF THE DANISH FAR LEFT TO GAIN AN INORDINATE AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE OVER GREENLAND, STUDENTS IN DENMARK AND TO SHAPE THEIR PRESENT ATTITUDES.

8. HESSELBJERG CLOSED BY SAYING THAT HIS PLANNERS ARE WORRIED BY THE UNCERTAINITIES OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN GREENLAND, BUT HE GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THIS WAS MORE OF A CRITICISM OF THE BUREAUCRATIC PENCHANT FOR CERTAINTY RATHER THAN ANY REAL WORRY ON HIS PART.

9. COMMENTS: HESSELBJERG, "MR. GREENLAND" AS FAR AS DENMARK IS CONCERNED, IS AN ABLE, LIKEABLE CIVIL SERVANT OF LONG EXPERIENCE. HE IS EXPECTEDLY CONSERVATIVE AND AS RECENTLY AS APRIL 1975 HE PREDICTED THAT THE PROGRESS TOWARD HOME RULE DESCRIBED ABOVE WOULD STILL BE FAR IN THE FUTURE. ALTHOUGH A COUNTRY'S DEGREE OF PROVERTY HAS NOT ORDINARILY BEEN AN IMPEDIMENT TO ITS ACHIEVEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE, THE SPEED AND EXTENT OF THE EXPLOITATION OF GREENLAND'S RESOURCES WILL HAVE AN OBVIOUS INFLUENCE ON HOME-RULE DEVELOPMENTS. IN THIS REGARD, HESSELBJERG MAY BE SLIGHT NAIVE TO THINK THAT DENMARK CAN KEEP EXCLUSIVE CONTROL OVER GREENLAND'S RESOURCES AND CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL GREENLANDERS MERE WINDOW-DRESSING.

10. FURTHERMORE, THE PRESENCE OF THE U.S. BASES IN GREENLAND WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE A TARGET FOR AGITATION BY THE YOUNG RADICAL GREENLAND LEADERS, SUCH AS MP LARS EMIL HANSEN. ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT SEE THAT THE STATUS OF THE BASES IS SUBJECT TO AN EARLY THREAT, THEIR LONGER-TERM PROSPECTS WILL DEPEND GREATLY ON HOW AND HOW FAST THE SCENARIO TOWARD "HOME RULE" UNFOLDS.
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Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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